

NOTES

A SPECIMEN OF A MIGRANT CLAPPER RAIL
FROM THE INTERIOR OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

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A specimen of the Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) collected in the interior of the southern Florida peninsula adds further evidence that this maritime species at least occasionally occurs inland and that Atlantic Coast breeders may migrate across Florida to winter along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

On 13 September 2004, Matthew B. Toomey and Christopher Valligny, two students associated with Archbold Biological Station, collected a freshly dead specimen of a large *Rallus*, that had been impaled on a barbed wire fence in a small fresh-water marsh along the north side of highway SR 74 about 2 km east of road CR 731, near Rainey Slough in Glades County, Florida (lat 26°57'N, long 81°28'W). Glades County lies in the longitudinal middle of the Florida peninsula along the west shore of Lake Okeechobee. The individual (male, testes 7 × 3 mm), prepared as a study skin (GEW 5953), is in fresh Basic I plumage (Humphrey and Parkes 1959).

The specimen is identifiable as a *R. longirostris* and not the similar fresh-water inhabiting *R. elegans* by the gray cheeks and margins of the dorsal feathers, and in lacking the russet lesser wing coverts of the latter species (Eddleman and Conway 1998). It is recognizable as the northernmost subspecies, *R. l. crepitans*, which breeds along the Atlantic Coast from Connecticut to South Carolina by having the dorsal feathers with very light, almost bluish-gray margins with decidedly olivaceous centers. The belly and lower breast are white, with traces of fulvous wash only on the neck and upper breast. These fulvous feathers of the adult plumage include some that are still growing. The specimen is fully adult in size although it probably had been capable of flight for no more than two months. It represents the southernmost known occurrence for the subspecies *R. l. crepitans*.

Several other specimens provide evidence that some Atlantic Coast Clapper Rails (*R. l. crepitans* and *R. l. waynei*) winter along the Gulf Coast of Florida. For Gulf Coast counties, Crawford et al. (1983) list non-breeding specimens of *R. l. crepitans* from Wakulla and Franklin counties and specimens of *R. l. waynei* from Franklin and Pinellas counties. Three specimens support the opinion that Atlantic Coast Clapper Rails reach the Gulf Coast by flying across northern and central peninsular Florida. One *R. l. crepitans* was taken at the WDBO tower in Orange County in fall (11 September 1969), and two *R. l. waynei* were taken at Tallahassee in Leon County, one in fall (6 October 1965), the other in spring (9 April 1980) (Crawford et al. 1983). *R. l. crepitans* breeds on the Atlantic Coast far north of Florida, and the Glades county specimen was probably a migrant as opposed to a wanderer when collected (13 September 2004). The occurrence supports the idea that Atlantic Coast Clapper Rails migrate across peninsular Florida to winter along the east shore of the Gulf of Mexico, and extends the trans-peninsular migratory pathway farther south than previously known.

The specimen (GEW 5953) is housed with the bird collections at Archbold Biological Station. We thank Andrew W. Kratter for lending specimens to GEW from the collections at the Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida.

LITERATURE CITED

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